# AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE PROBABILITY OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR THE 'HIGH RISK' COLLEGE ASPIRANT

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Higher education as a social institution in a democratic society has a responsibility to meet the educational needs of individuals as well as of society as a whole. While demonstrating some cultural lag, American higher education has generally adopted structure and processes consistent with the prevailing educational demands of the people. Movements in the social and intellectual life of the nation are reflected in the history of education in this country. The Morrill Act of 1862 reflected a change from the English concept of a scholastic education for the elite to the concept of the need for a practical education and the development of the varying potentials of each individual. During the latter half of the twentieth century, the shift from a rural to an urban population, the impact of an advanced technology, and the demand for education beyond high school for a greater proportion of the population produced the multiversity and the comprehensive junior college. The trend toward higher education for all who desire it has been accelerated by the increased demands for the products of colleges, legislation that provides financial aid to students in need, and the feeling of the general public that a college education is necessary if one is to live fully in a complex society.

## Need for the Study

The trend toward universal higher education has increased the number and heterogeneity of students on campuses across the nation. As a greater percentage of college age students seek to continue their education, the variance among students becomes greater and some of these students become high risk in terms of present higher education processes and programs. There is currently a heightened interest in serving the needs of the high risk, the disadvantaged, or non-typical college student. The needs of these students challenge the traditional approaches of higher education and require a re-examination of the question of who can succeed in college.

Excellence in education is not based on exclusiveness in admissions, rigidity in curriculum, and severity in grading. Rather, excellence is taking the individual student where he is and helping him to achieve his potential. Colleges must not only offer the high risk students an opportunity to succeed, but they have a responsibility to help them succeed. "The focus should be on programs designed to escalate the level of functioning rather than on matching students with inferred potential to programs of specified difficulty levels" (61, p. 69). Educators should assume that every student has unique potentialities to be nurtured and developed.

The need today is for an expansion of programs and approaches that take into consideration the varying abilities, goals, cognitive styles, and past experiences of a wide range of students. Specifically, there is a need for experimental programs at the college level which are designed to meet the varying educational needs of the high risk student and that test his potential for academic success. These programs must

attempt to individualize and personalize the educational experiences of each student. Unless institutions of higher education rise to meet this challenge, they risk the possibility of becoming irrelevant to a significant segment of people in a changing society.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if an experimental program that incorporates both the teaching of academic skills and the conditions for increased self-understanding of select personality variables can assist high risk college aspirants to be academically successful during the first year of college.

The terms high risk or disadvantaged are generic descriptions of a body of individuals varying widely as to their abilities, attitudes, and behaviors. The label high risk is used to designate students whose low college admissions test scores, erratic high school records, and personal-cultural characteristics, taken together, place them at a disadvantage in academic competition with the majority of students at the host institution.

This study will seek to identify those educational experiences that will contribute to the academic success of individual high risk students. The integration of these educational experiences into an experimental program designed to meet the needs of the student will be in contrast to what appears to be the present approach of many institutions of higher education, that of expecting the student to fit predetermined programs and methods of operation.

This research will indirectly study the question of how valid and realistic are present restrictive admissions policies and standards at the university level. Restrictive admission standards combined with

traditional academic programs tend to operate to the disadvantage of the high risk student and limit his opportunities to develop his potential.

It is the intent of this study that the research findings will contribute to the development of a theory base for use in planning and revising college programs and procedures. Specifically, the study is designed to increase the information base relating to the educational activities that will best meet the needs of the high risk student and increase the probability of his academic success at the college level.

A review of the literature, the results of which are presented in the next chapter, was undertaken to study the question of who has academic potential for college, to review the factors related to academic achievement in college, and to examine various educational experiences that could best assist the high risk student to be academically successful. Current programs for high risk students were reviewed to determine program designs, populations served, and results achieved.

# CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Higher education is being pressured to re-examine the questions of who is capable of benefiting from the college experience and who is capable of contributing to the intellectual life of society. The pressure comes from the general public, intent on universal higher education, and from the disadvantaged members of society whose voices are becoming more articulate and persuasive. This pressure is coming also from educators dedicated to the constant study and improvement of higher education. Unfortunately, little scientific validation has been made of the educational theories and practices underlying the admissions policies and curricula of higher education (59). Tradition still determines for the most part who shall attend college and what shall be the nature of the college experience.

### Academic Potential for College

The existing concepts of academic potential and ability to attend college have come into existence during this century. These concepts were influenced greatly by the development and use of group tests for aptitude and achievement. As the use of these tests spread to numerous colleges, attention was directed to the student and his characteristics rather than to the environment for learning. With a way to measure the capacity for learning given tasks, competition developed for those students who performed best on these tests. Institutional status, and

thus faculty ego, was built around selectivity based on test scores in part. High test scores for admission can then be equated to high standards. Test scores solved some difficult problems for the admissions officers.

This would all be well if tests of aptitude and achievement were precise and accurate measures of the potentials and needs of students in relation to the purposes and goals of colleges. Borislow (5) notes that despite continuing efforts to improve scholastic aptitude tests as predictors of early college grades, the obtained validity coefficients appear to have reached an asymptote in the area of about .50. This view is supported by Lavin (36) who reports that for educational levels for which data are most reliable, high school and college, measures of ability on the average account for 35 to 45 percent of the variation in academic performance. Lins (39) concludes on the basis of his study of 3,700 freshmen at the University of Wisconsin that there is little relationship between grade point average earned and ACT or SAT scores. Also, he found that neither high school grade point average or centile rank were any better predictors of college grades than were the ACT or SAT scores.

Colleges with selective admissions primarily select their applicants on the basis of secondary school grades and scores on tests of academic aptitude. These check points predict success at college with considerable error when one considers the fact that "more than 350,000 students flunk out of college each year" (4, p. 116). Dorothy Knoell (33, p. 66), in her review of research on the college dropout, reports that:

> Collegiate institutions have lost and continue to lose about half their undergraduate students in the four years after freshman

> admission, despite changes in student characteristics, programs offered, standards enforced, and services rendered. A total of 60 percent graduate from some institution, at varying times - approximately 40 percent four years after entering a particular institution and an additional 20 percent at a later time and/or elsewhere.

The lack of validity in using aptitude test scores for admission standards is especially noteworthy when a cutting score is established. Smith (64, p. 28) studied entrance placement test scores of 1,006 students who obtained degrees at the 1955 commencement exercises at the University of Kansas, which maintains an open door admissions policy. The results of the study reveal that:

> If restrictions for admissions had been applied on the basis of a general intelligence test and an English aptitude test, about 21 percent of the graduates would not have been admitted as freshmen if the cutting score of the fiftieth percentile had been in operation. These 21 percent of the graduating class represented forty teachers, twenty-two engineers, five journalists, seven lawyers, seven medical doctors, seven pharmacists, and ninety-six graduates from the School of Business and the College of Arts and Science.

A significant loss of talent to society could have occurred if admission test cutting scores had been used at the University of Kansas. At a multiversity, it is very difficult to use admission criteria when there is such a range of majors and programs for students.

It would appear that a reconceptionalization of the concepts of potential and prediction would be of value to higher education. Schwebel (61) presents a rationale that is more in accord with the purpose of higher education, that is, learning and the development of the mind. He views human potential as a continuous growth process, and a cognitive test score as an estimate of current functioning. Schwebel refers to the studies of Benjamin Bloom and Edward Bennett to support his assumption that there is no known finite limit to mental development. He holds that the major problem of prediction is not inherent in the instruments used but in the uncertainties faced concerning the

extent to which conditions will change to alter the mental functioning of people. This suggests that with appropriate intervention, handicaps to learning can be treated and mental functioning enhanced. Tests of mental functioning become diagnostic tools to be used in combination with other information about a person. Prediction would be only as accurate as the diagnosis and the extent to which it can be predetermined what will be the impact of environmental conditions on the mental functioning of an individual.

## Factors Related to Academic Achievement

A review of the literature dealing with academic underachievement at the high school and college level suggests two conclusions: first, there has been no consistent methodological approach to studying the problem of underachievement; and secondly, no consistent pattern of factors related to underachievement has been found (43). Raph and Goldberg (51) reported on seventy-seven studies of underachievement at the college level made from 1923 - 1963 inclusive. They note that, in general, researchers and writers on the subject of underachievement in college recognize the inadequacy of the data for making generalizations regarding causes and treatment. These writers recognize the measurement errors that exist in the use of aptitude test scores as predictors, the questionable validity of teacher grades, grade point averages, class rank, and achievement test results. There is a great variance in the meaning of achievement and aptitude scores from one person to another. Kornrich (34) concludes from a review of fifty-one papers concerning underachievement written since 1960 that success in academic work is determined by a multiplicity of factors both external and internal to the student.

With the above cautions and limitations, the following literature is reported to give an overview of the cited causes and characteristics related to achievement. Attention was directed to studies that give insights into a possible theory base and the educational experiences to be used for the experimental program.

Underachievement is a degenerative process, most often beginning early in life and having cumulative effects (16). Roth and Meyers (44, pp. 280-281) advance the following constructs related to non-achievement:

1. The student's poor academic achievement does not arise from an incapacity to achieve. There are other factors preventing achievement.
2. Poor achievement is an expression of the student's choice.
3. The student's choice for poor achievement operates in the preparation he makes for achievement.
4. Poor academic skills are related to achievement and are an outgrowth of previous choices for poor achievement.
5. The patterns of choice for poor achievement are enduring and do not undergo spontaneous change.
6. Achievement patterns, like other enduring behavior patterns, can be considered to be related to personality organization.

Characteristics of college underachievers as reported by Leib and Snyder (38) include a concern with immediate need gratification, a need for social love and affection, and a need to be dependent on others. In addition, the underachievers prefer not to take risks or face threats, are less able to express negative feelings directly, have limited perceptions of others and themselves, and are typically discontent and dissatisfied with themselves.

Some factors related in a positive direction to achievement in a college population are their awareness and concern for others, their

sense of responsibility, a need to achieve, and self confidence (42).

A study by Lum (40) with college students presents evidence that underachievers are less motivated to study, are less confident, are less able to work effectively while under psychological pressure, have lower expectancies than overachievers, and are more present oriented.

Gilbreath (22) concludes from recent descriptive and theoretical research that underlying emotional patterns of the underachiever include a strong need for dependent relationships, a self concept that is inferior, an inability to express feelings of anger overtly, a weakness in ego strength, and ambiguous or unrealistic purposes, goals and values.

The study of existing research on underachievement by Wellington and Wellington (71) reinforces the findings of previous literature cited. They feel that there is valid evidence that underachievers have a low self concept and a low level of aspiration, are self concerned, are somewhat anxious and dependent, and that they take little responsibility for themselves. In general, the underachiever has a self concept which is confused between hope that he will succeed and unwillingness to take necessary steps for fear he will fail.

The relationship between self concept and academic achievement is reciprocal. In some cases, a negative self concept seems to hinder academic achievement, while in other cases, a negative concept of self seems to be the product of poor achievement (68).

A review of the literature on dropouts from college suggests that the largest number of dropouts are due to motivational factors. Unfortunately, it is not known what motivational factors are predictive, and it is not known how to measure accurately such motives in students (66).

The causes of dropping out lie not only in the student but also in the institution and the interaction between the two (50).

The literature on the culturally disadvantaged learner is extensive and generally supportive of the literature on achievement. A good review of the literature concerning the culturally disadvantaged has been accomplished by Gordon and Wilkerson, Compensatory Education for the Disadvantaged (25). The literature on the disadvantaged group and individual seems to place more emphasis on viewing their behavior both as a product of their past social heritage and as an adjustment to present social pressures and problems in a new environment (70). Concern is expressed that the traditional elements of education are inappropriate and lack theoretical structure relevant to the disadvantaged child (19). The recent trend in the study of achievement is similar in that more emphasis is being placed on the study of predictive criteria that will give a more complete understanding of the individual (72), and studies that examine the interaction between the individual and the total environment for learning (34; 36; 50; 58; 61; 71).

A review of the literature on factors related to academic achievement suggests to this writer that the search for the causes of variations in academic performance has moved from the traditional concern for ability factors as predictors to a study of personality characteristics as correlates of scholastic achievement. The recent trend for studies of academic prediction is to assess possible interaction effects between the individual's total personality structure, other individuals and groups relating to the individual, and an assortment of other variables that structure the individual's environment.

## Educational Program Elements and Academic Achievement

Rogers (56) believes that the facilitation of significant learning is dependent upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationships between the facilitator and the learner. He supports this belief with findings from the field of psychotherapy as well as from limited classroom studies. Rogers holds that:

> Those attitudes that appear effective in promoting learning can be described. First of all is a transparent realness in the facilitator, a willingness to be a person, to be and live the feelings and thoughts of the moment. When this realness includes a prizing, a caring, a trust and respect for the learner, the climate for learning is enhanced. When it includes a sensitive and accurate empathic listening, then indeed a freeing climate, stimulative of self-initiated learning and growth, exists. (56, p. 12).
>
> . . . So we may say, with a certain degree of assurance, that the attitudes I have endeavored to describe are not only effective in facilitating a deeper learning and understanding of self in a relationship such as psychotherapy, but that these attitudes characterize teachers who are regarded as effective teachers, and that the students of these teachers learn more, even of a conventional curriculum, than do students of teachers who are lacking in these attitudes. (56, p. 9).

Rogers concludes that if we are to have individuals who can live fully in a changing environment, we must help them to become self-starting learners, and this kind of learner develops best in a facilitative relationship with a person. These observations by Rogers have program implications for teachers, counselors, and administrators in their respective roles with individual students.

One of the most promising avenues for the treatment and prevention of underachievement would seem to be in the group setting (58). In the context of higher education, group settings could be counseling, class discussions, or orientation.

A study by Gilbreath (22) used leader structured versus group structured methods of group counseling with underachieving college

males. Both groups achieved a similar rate of positive change in grade point averages after counseling, and the change was significantly greater than that of a control group. Sheldon and Landsman (62) found that non-directive group therapy was more effective than a traditional lecture-discussion "Academic Methods" class when working with students in academic difficulty.

The results of a study of the effects of group discussion on achievement and self-actualization in contrast to a lecture group approach showed that significant increments in self-actualization and grade point averages occurred without significant differences between groups. It was felt that the special attention awarded these under-achievers fulfilled lower level needs which released them for self-actualization, as well as producing significant gains in grades (38).

Leasure (37) reports the effects of student centered and leader planned orientation groups upon the collegiate adjustment of freshman males. This study would seem to indicate that the student centered method was superior to the teacher planned in enhancing academic achievement, and that either method is far superior to no program of concentrated orientation.

The choice of a major or vocation is one of the first long-range goal related decisions of the college student (59). Super (67) and Holland (31) note that the choice of a vocation puts into occupational terminology the kind of person one is and implements a concept of one-self. This vocation related decision can serve as a motivating force for the student to do what is necessary to reach that goal (35). Academic achievement would be part of the activity required to reach a chosen vocational goal.

Entwisle (15) reviewed 22 studies relating to study skills courses and reading instruction. She concludes that reading and study skills instruction is usually followed by improvement in academic performance. These studies are supported by evidence from studies reviewed by Lavin (36) which indicate that study habits are positively related to academic performance.

The use of a case study approach with students having academic difficulty is suggested by Barbe (1) and Noel (48). Since there are many causes and remedies related to low achievement, the case study approach provides needed structure for the educator to use in gathering information and making decisions as to needed remedial procedures for each student.

The use of a diagnostic approach to help the college flunk-out has been used effectively by the Educational Development Center, Berea, Ohio. The Center diagnoses the individual's real causes for academic failure and tailor-makes a course to meet his needs. The typical flunk-out who comes to the Center has a very low self concept. Other characteristics of these students include: nearly 35 percent are overly dependent upon their parents; nearly 25 percent suffer a passive-aggression reaction; many exhibit a language inhibition; and the majority have the necessary aptitude and study skills needed for college. The courses offered to students at the Center involve remedial work in the basic language skills of reading, writing, and speaking. Students work in small groups, follow rigid deadlines, and receive rapid feedback on their work. Ninety-seven percent of the 325 academic failures who have attended the Center's special 10 week course have returned to

college and have raised their grade point average nearly one full point over their previous academic records (4).

During the spring of 1964, a questionnaire was mailed to 2,093 institutions of higher education in the United States in an effort to identify colleges and universities that were developing compensatory programs and practices for the disadvantaged. Reports were received from 610 institutions, and 224 reported they were conducting a variety of compensatory practices. Of the practices reported, 62 percent of the frequencies are accounted for by counseling, credit and non-credit remedial courses, instruction in study skills, tutoring, special curriculums, and lengthened time for completing degree requirements. The disadvantaged students assisted were mainly white in 60 percent of the institutions, mainly Negro in 27 percent, and mainly other racial groups in 13 percent of the institutions. Whereas most of the Negro students came from urban communities, the white students came from urban and rural areas in approximately equal proportions. It would appear that emphasis was placed on recruitment and then offering the students a program of services long available on most campuses. The survey revealed that very few of the programs have been systematically evaluated. It is essential that more programs be evaluated to provide guidelines for future developments (25).

The Southern Education Record, early in 1968, sent questionnaires to 215 selected colleges and universities, excluding Negro institutions, to inquire if they were providing programs for the high risk or disadvantaged student. The questionnaire asked the nature and extent of programs for the population of students whose cultural, economic, and educational handicaps (in comparison with the regular student body)

classified them as high risk enrollees. Returns from 159 institutions revealed that 84 of them (53 percent) had some involvement in high risk programs as defined. No more than 20 institutions had drawn extensively from the array of possible support elements--financial aid, counseling and guidance, lighter course loads, summer programs, tutoring, separate classes, remedial courses, redesigned curriculums, and special housing arrangements. Evidence of effectiveness of the programs was reported in terms of retention rates at the end of one year, which ranged from 25 to 80 percent. The report suggests that the evidence as to effectiveness was inconclusive as reported. A great many things are being tried by a relatively small number of institutions to develop the potential of disadvantaged students, but few of these institutions have marshaled all the resources available to them for this task (14).

## Conclusions

The literature reviewed suggests a need to re-conceptualize the question of academic potential, offers insight into the factors related to academic achievement, and provides some direction as to the educational program elements that may affect achievement. A review of information sources which described current higher education programs for the high risk student revealed little evidence that the programs were utilizing a theory base, structuring the services provided to create a facilitating environment, or making a concerted effort to evaluate their effectiveness beyond the use of retention rates.

The theoretical base and basic assumptions that will serve as a frame of reference for this study and for the development of the experimental program are presented in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER III

## THEORETICAL BASE AND ASSUMPTIONS

The planning of an educational environment must be guided by a theory of personality. This theory should state goals for the individual, describe interrelations of various psychological processes, and provide understanding of the ways in which an individual changes under the impact of environmental forces (60). A theory of personality is in effect a theory of behavior. Theories of personality are concerned with questions that make a difference in the behavior and adjustment of the whole individual in his environment.

The intent of this chapter is to propose tenets that appear to provide guidelines for observing and affecting the behavior of the high risk student. The choice of personality tenets was guided by learnings from the review of literature and from this researcher's experiences in higher education. The tenets of the proposed theoretical base are followed by the basic assumptions underlying this study.

### Theoretical Base

The review of literature included numerous articles that suggested the importance of viewing the behavior of individuals in relationship to their environment (34; 36; 44; 50; 61; 70; 71). Another series of studies (22; 38; 40; 42; 71) emphasized the concept of self as it relates to academic achievement. The general theory of phenomenological psychology and the specific theory of personality proposed by

Carl Rogers (52; 53; 54; 55; 56) explain behavior in relationship to the self and environment of the individual. These two sources supply the first tenet for the proposed frame of reference for viewing the behavior of high risk students.

Phenomenological psychology views behavior from the perspective of the individual himself. What governs behavior from the point of view of the individual are his unique perceptions of himself and the world in which he lives, the meanings that things have for him. To produce a change in behavior, it will be necessary to produce some change in the individual's perceptual field, change the way he sees himself and his environment (9).

Carl Rogers' theory of personality is basically phenomenological in character and relies heavily upon the concept of self as an explanatory construct. The principal tenets of his theory revolve around the concepts of the organism, the phenomenal field, and the self. The organism or individual has the one basic motive to actualize, unfold, maintain, and enhance itself as it moves toward maturity. It is the central search for "Who am I" and "How may I become myself." The organism exists in an environment or surrounding which is its phenomenal field and reacts as a whole to the field as it satisfies its needs. The self is a differentiated portion of the phenomenal field and consists of a pattern of conscious perceptions and values of the "I" or "me." The self can change and grow as a result of maturation and learning. Rogers feels that an atmosphere of genuineness, regard, acceptance, sensitivity, and empathy will contribute to the process of growth or self actualization. The aim of education is the facilitation

of growth and learning by providing the appropriate atmosphere (52; 53; 54; 55; 56).

Combs and Snygg make some assumptions about the techniques that could be used by schools to develop adequate self concepts in students. First, schools should provide each student with opportunities to see himself as a responsible and contributing member of his society. This requires a democratic atmosphere in which there is respect for the needs and potentialities of each student and where open communication is encouraged. Second, schools should provide students opportunities for success and appreciation through the use of their talents and areas of strength. Finally, schools should provide students with a maximum of challenge and a minimum of threat. If the student is to have a feeling of competence and acceptability, he must experience success and be accepted for himself (9).

A second tenet of the proposed theoretical base that is to serve as a frame of reference for this study is taken from the theory of Reality Therapy as developed by William Glasser (23). At least four sources (4; 40; 42; 71) from the review of literature relating to achievement suggest that certain aspects of Reality Therapy, the concepts of responsibility and reality, should be especially effective with the high risk student. Reality Therapy is compatible with the phenomenological approach to human behavior.

The basis of Reality Therapy is helping the individual fulfill two basic psychological needs: The need to love and be loved, and the need to feel that we are worthwhile to ourselves and to others. Everyone who needs psychological treatment suffers from one basic inadequacy; he is unable to fulfill his essential needs. In the unsuccessful effort

to fulfill their needs, all patients have the common characteristic of denying the reality of the world around them. Therapy will be successful when the clients are able to give up denying the world and recognize that reality not only exists but that they must fulfill their needs within its framework. Basic needs are fulfilled through the process of emotional involvement with at least one other person. Involvement means communicating that you care and that you will allow the patient to care about you. In therapy, once involvement occurs, the therapist begins to insist that the patient face the reality of his behavior and accept his responsibility for it. Responsibility is defined as the ability to fulfill one's needs and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs. Once the individual accepts the responsibility for his behavior, the last phase of therapy--relearning--begins. Actually, relearning is merged into the whole treatment (23; 24).

Glasser states that Reality Therapy can be applied to the school situation in that the difference between therapy and common guidance is in intensity, not in kind. In the school setting, the question is how do responsible students behave or function in the reality of the school's framework. The teacher must become involved, reject irresponsibility, and help the student learn better ways of behaving. Once a student begins to fulfill his needs, his behavior changes, he learns more easily, and he becomes a more responsible person. The school environment can be structured to cause the student to face reality and be responsible. Specific techniques that are recommended include expanding the range of interests of students, examine their strong points, focus on responsibility in the present, have students discuss

their goals and how they will accomplish them, and express care for the student as an individual (23; 24).

A third tenet of the theoretical base for this study is taken from the basic concepts of logotherapy as proposed by Viktor Frankl (17). Logotherapy provides a point of reference for describing and measuring purpose in life and motivation, and the literature (22; 35; 40; 59; 66) suggests that purpose and goals are important variables related to achievement. Logotherapy concepts appear to be compatible with the phenomenological and Reality Therapy approaches to viewing human behavior.

The school of logotherapy holds that each man must find his purpose for living, and he must accept the responsibility that his answer prescribes. Logotherapy is an application of the principles of existential philosophy to clinical practice. Frankl's basic contention is that a new type of neurosis is evident in society today, and that this new syndrome arises largely as a response to a complete emptiness of purpose in life. The main dynamic is "existential frustration" created by a vacuum of perceived meaning in personal existence, and is manifested by the symptom of boredom. According to Frankl, the essence of human motivation is the "will to meaning," and when the "will to meaning" is not found, the individual becomes "existentially frustrated." The phrase "purpose in life" may be defined as the ontological significance of life from the point of view of the experiencing individual, or the degree to which the individual has found meaningful goals around which to integrate his life (17; 18).

Logotherapy focuses on the future and on the meanings to be fulfilled by the individual in his future. It focuses on the meaning of

human existence to each person as well as on man's search for such a meaning. The striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. The role of the therapist is to help the individual widen and broaden his visual field so that the whole spectrum of meaning and values becomes conscious and visible to him. Man can discover meaning in life in three different ways: by doing a deed, by experiencing a value (work, love, God), or by suffering as a sacrifice. Logotherapy tries to make the individual fully aware of his own responsibilities, but leaves to him the option for what, to what or to whom he understands himself to be responsible (17; 18).

The final tenet of the theoretical base for this study is the concept of reference groups. Research evidence (22; 37; 38; 58; 62) supports the concept of reference groups and directs attention to a needed level of analysis of academic achievement. Newcomb (47) states that the concept of reference group fits the study of peer group influence, and that theoretical reasons for expecting important peer group effects within colleges are very convincing. The hope is that higher education can utilize these influences to better carry out its purposes.

Influences affecting an individual's behavior are composed of interacting influences coming from the individual himself, from his reference groups, and from his sociocultural setting. The term reference group recognizes the interdependence between the individual's own attitudes and the attitudes he perceives other social objects to hold on a matter. Man's experience as being accepted or rejected, and his status and prestige concerns have little meaning apart from his claims and aspirations in given group settings. Becoming a member of a group or aspiring to become one generates a sense of inner urgency to cherish

and uphold the goals, norms, and values of that group. Reference groups serve as major anchorings in an individual's frame of reference, which includes all internal and external factors operating to affect behavior (46; 63).

The significant thing about a reference group is that its norms provide frames of reference which actually influence the attitudes and behavior of a person. An implication for education is that it may be possible to provide or encourage group moorings with socially and educationally desirable values and goals as an integral part of these groups.

## Basic Assumptions

The assumptions on which this study and the experimental program are based are in harmony with the described theoretical frame of reference and the findings from the review of literature.

1. Every individual has worth, a capacity and tendency toward growth, and potential to be developed for the benefit of the individual and society.
2. The facilitation of growth and learning is more likely to occur in an atmosphere in which personal relationships are oriented toward caring, trusting, and success.
3. Academic performance must be viewed in terms of the interaction effects between the individual's cognitive and emotive qualities, other individuals and groups relating to the individual, and the other variables that structure the total educational environment.
4. To increase the probability of academic success for the high risk student, intervention is necessary in both the behavioral

patterns of each student and in the structure and processes of the host institution of higher education.

5. A diagnostic approach to the education of the high risk student will best meet individual needs and respect individual goals.
6. The skills of reading, writing, and listening, as well as effective study habits, are essential to academic achievement.
7. Motivation is an important variable related to achievement. A program designed to increase an individual's understanding of his self concept, his level of reality and responsibility, and his life goals will affect motivation as defined and measured through the concept of "purpose in life."
8. The experimental program will be the contributing factor to the academic success of the high risk students during their first year of college.

## Conclusions

The suggested theoretical base and the basic assumptions laid down will serve as a frame of reference for the development of the experimental program. The design and methodology of the study and the experimental program as described in the next chapter are based on the findings from the review of literature.

# CHAPTER IV

## DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to (1) state the problem, (2) present the plan for the study, (3) describe the population and sample, (4) explain the experimental program design and procedures, (5) state the hypotheses and research questions, (6) describe data collection and analysis procedures, (7) define selected terms, and (8) suggest the limitations of the study.

### Statement of the Problem

The problem for this study was to determine if an experimental program that incorporates both the teaching of academic skills and the conditions for increased self-understanding of select personality variables can assist high risk college aspirants to be academically successful during the first year of college.

### Plan for the Study

The study required the development of an experimental program based on the needs of high risk college students and the processes of the system of higher education in this country. The experimental program, the independent variable for this study, included the selection and structuring of educational experiences that will contribute to the academic success of the high risk student, the hiring and inservice training of staff members, the recruiting of subjects from the target

population, and the carrying out of the planned program.

The primary dependent variable for this study was an index of academic success defined in terms of an earned grade point average. A secondary dependent variable was the pre and post measurement of the concept 'purpose in life' through the use of the Purpose-In-Life Test.

The Purpose-In-Life Test (see Appendix A), as developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (10), is an attitude scale designed to measure the degree to which the subject experiences a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The concept of 'purpose in life' has been defined by Frankl (17) as an index of general motivation, and motivation is assumed to be one of the personality variables related to academic success. On the basis of experimental studies with 225 subjects (10), and 1151 additional subjects (11), Crumbaugh concludes that the PIL instrument is a reliable and valid measure of Frankl's conception of meaning and purpose in life, and that the results favor the correctness of his formulations in logotherapy.

Additional questions examined empirically were (1) a pre and post comparison of reading test scores, (2) a pre and post comparison of aptitude test scores, (3) a comparison of high school and college cumulative grade point averages, and (4) the academic suspension and drop-out rates for each semester. A non-empirically based question examined was the subjective statements of the subjects and staff as to the value of the experimental program.

The experimental program was a part of the regular eight week summer term at the host university. While the experimental group subjects were taking part in the experimental program, the subjects in comparison group one were allowed to follow a regular summer term program

of courses and co-curricular experiences. Comparison group number two was not enrolled during the summer term. During the fall and spring semester following the summer term experimental program, both comparison groups and the experimental group were allowed to follow regular course and co-curricular experiences. No treatment was given beyond the usual academic advisement extended to all students. The course of studies taken by the students in each group was comparable in that the first year of study at the host institution is dedicated to meeting general studies requirements.

Data on the subjects for the study were collected to permit analyses of the characteristics and academic success of each group. Data were collected for three semesters for the experimental group and comparison group number one, and two semesters for comparison group number two.

An administrative supervisor for the experimental program had the responsibility of seeing that the program was implemented as planned.

## Selection and Description of Subjects

The three (3) subject groups studied in this research were the experimental group, comparison group one, and comparison group two. The subjects were enrolled at Oklahoma State University during the summer of 1968 and/or the fall and spring of the 1968-69 academic year. The subjects were new freshman students enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences freshman orientation course.

Oklahoma State University, the host institution for this study, had approximately 17,000 students enrolled during the 1968-69 period covered by this research. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (49) restrict enrollment at the state universities to high school

graduates who meet one of the following requirements: (1) Maintain a high school average of "B-" (2.5) or better; (2) Rank scholastically in the upper one-half of his graduating class; (3) Attain an ACT Composite Standard Score that places him in the upper one-half of high school seniors, based on twelfth grade national norms. An individual not eligible for admission as stated may enter summer school "on probation." To be eligible for continued enrollment in the fall semester, the student must carry six or more hours of regular college study and achieve a grade point average of 1.6 or higher.

The experimental group was drawn from the total population of high school seniors in Oklahoma who scored 15 or below on the ACT Composite Score and who sent their scores to Oklahoma State University. Approximately 3,000 letters (see Appendix B) were sent to these students inviting them to participate in a summer experimental program called "Operation Cope." High school counselors in Oklahoma were sent information about "Operation Cope." A total of 36 students applied for the program. Due to the limited number of applications for the program, all 36 applicants were accepted. The experimental group size was reduced to 35 when one student, after arriving on campus, decided not to participate in the program. Eight subjects in the experimental group met admission standards on the basis of high school grades and/or ACT Composite scores. These students were allowed to participate in the experimental program because of their expressed concern about succeeding in college and/or their marginal high school grades or ACT scores. See Table I for descriptive information about the experimental group and the two comparison groups.

TABLE I

SUBJECT GROUP DESCRIPTIONS

| Group | Number | High School GPA Mean | ACT Composite Score Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group<br>(18 males)<br>(17 females) | 35 | 2.071 | 13.486 |
| Comparison Group One<br>(14 males)<br>(28 females) | 42 | 3.107 | 20.524 |
| Comparison Group Two<br>(31 males)<br>(44 females) | 75 | 2.780 | 13.253 |

Comparison group one was composed of all new summer term freshmen enrolled in a required orientation course in the College of Arts and Sciences. The original group size of 53 was reduced to 42 due to class absences during either the pre- or post-testing sessions. One subject in comparison group one did not meet admission standards on the basis of high school grades or ACT scores.

Comparison group two was composed of all new freshmen with an ACT Composite Score of 15 or below who enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences required orientation course during the fall semester following the summer term experimental program. Comparison group two included 75 students. All the subjects in comparison group two met admission standards for the host institution on criteria other than ACT Composite scores and thus were permitted to enroll for the fall semester.

The difference in ACT Composite score means between the experimental group and comparison group one was significant at the .05 level. The difference in ACT Composite score means between the experimental group and comparison group two was not significant at the .05 level. Table II presents the ACT means comparison data.

TABLE II

ACT COMPOSITE SCORE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND *t*-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND EACH OF THE COMPARISON GROUPS

| Group | Mean | Standard Deviation | *t*-Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 13.486 | 3.043 | | |
| and | | | 7.2512 | .001 |
| Comparison Group One | 20.524 | 5.023 | | |
| Experimental Group | 13.486 | 3.042 | | |
| and | | | .4907 | NS |
| Comparison Group Two | 13.253 | 1.889 | | |

Critical value of *t* at .05 level is 2.000.

The difference in high school grade point average means between the experimental group and comparison group one was significant at the .05 level. The difference in high school grade point average means between the experimental group and comparison group two was significant at the .05 level. See Table III for the high school grade point average means comparison data.

TABLE III

HIGH SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND EACH OF THE COMPARISON GROUPS

| Group | Mean | Standard Deviation | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 2.071 | .3949 | 7.9265 | .001 |
| and Comparison Group One | 3.107 | .6831 | | |
| Experimental Group | 2.071 | .3949 | 7.7615 | .001 |
| and Comparison Group Two | 2.780 | .4684 | | |

Critical value of t at .05 level is 2.000.

The Purpose-In-Life Scale was completed by the experimental group and comparison group one on the second day of classes during the summer term in which the experimental program was offered. The pre-test measure results indicated that there was a significant difference in mean PIL scores at the .05 level between the experimental group and comparison group one. Table IV shows the results obtained from the pre-test measure using the Purpose-In-Life Scale.

TABLE IV

PURPOSE-IN-LIFE SCALE PRE-TEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND COMPARISON GROUP ONE

| Group | Mean | Standard Deviation | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 107.343 | 15.595 | | |
| | | | 2.498 | .02 |
| Comparison Group One | 115.571 | 13.307 | | |

Critical value of t at .05 level is 2.000.

## Experimental Program Design and Procedures

The experimental program design and procedures were based on the findings from the review of literature and on the proposed theoretical base and assumptions for the study.

The diagnostic approach to meeting each student's needs relative to his goal of academic success requires a program design that incorporates flexibility and variability. Diagnosis must be a continuous process during the program to provide the information needed to make decisions as to the best remedial prescription for each student. In addition, the program must be designed in such a way that the student's environment will provide the support needed and communicate the objectives of the program in a clear and persistent manner. The tenets from the theory base and the assumptions underlying the program must be integrated into each facet of program design and procedures.

Before the experimental group arrived on campus for the summer term, each student received a letter which attempted to communicate the purposes and concerns of the program. Data had been collected on each subject prior to this time through the use of an application blank (see Appendix C). These data provided the initial information to be used in the diagnostic approach.

The first day the subjects were on campus was used as an orientation period. Staff members met the students, and the program was explained in more detail. An information sheet (see Appendix D) was given to each subject. The final part of the day was utilized to enroll the students in six or more hours of course work which included recommended courses and electives.

The enrollment process was used to divide the subjects and staff members into two groups. This procedure placed each group of students in three courses together and allowed the influence of a reference group to come to bear early in the program. The three instructors for these courses plus a counselor and the program supervisor formed a staff subgroup, which allowed for effective communication and coordination of effort. To implement the diagnostic approach, weekly case study data sheets (see Appendix E) were submitted on each student by each staff member in the subgroup. The data sheets served as catalysts for discussion at the weekly staff meetings.

The staff for the program included six teachers, two counselors, two student counselors, four tutors, and student aids. All staff members were screened by the program supervisor using criteria based on their ability to implement the program purposes. Initial and continuous inservice training of the staff was accomplished through the use of readings and discussion groups. The staff members were oriented to the theory base and assumptions of the program, and were encouraged to discuss how they could apply these concepts to their area of service to the students.

On the basis of the findings from the literature review, each student in the experimental group was encouraged to enroll in freshman English, a reading course, and an orientation course. Every subject in the experimental group did enroll in a three credit hour freshman English course which emphasized basic grammar and writing skills. Content was geared to the proficiency level of the students with special concern for providing students with successful experiences. Reading assignments for the English course were used in the non-credit reading

and study skills course as part of their instructional materials. Twenty-nine of the thirty-five subjects in the experimental group enrolled in the reading improvement course. Electives chosen by the students to bring their credit hour total to six or more included psychology, sociology, physical education, music, art, history, radio-television, computer science, religion, and home economics. The purpose of the electives option was to allow each student to choose courses related to his special interests and goals.

An important part of the program was the one credit hour course called educational vocational orientation. In the course, the students were encouraged to discuss topics of concern to them. The student teacher for the course served as a discussion leader and a role model. Topics discussed by the students included values, services on campus, choice of an occupation, role of a student, study habits, and stress experienced at college. A primary purpose of the course was to help students become more sensitive to themselves and their environment, and to communicate their feelings to others. Each student was encouraged to keep a daily log of his feelings about college.

A professional counselor worked with the orientation course teacher and was available for individual counseling sessions. Counseling goals were similar to the goals of the total program. The counselor sought involvement with the student, encouraged him to be responsible and reality oriented, and offered the student assistance in his goal definition process. The counselors also served as resource persons to other staff members.

All but two of the subjects lived in a University residence hall. The males lived on one floor together as did the females in another

wing of the hall. A student counselor served as an important link in the weekly staff meetings. The students were responsible for the atmosphere maintained on the floor. A supervised study hall was provided in the residence hall with an English tutor available four nights a week. Other tutors were employed as the need developed. Social and recreational activities were scheduled through the residence hall program.

Student feedback as to the value of the experimental program was sought regularly and was used to adapt the program design and procedures. Feedback was obtained from the orientation course, from staff members, from a mid-term and exit interview with each student, and from daily contacts between students and the program supervisor.

The majority of the program elements utilized in the experimental program have been used before at institutions of higher education. The attempted extension of these program elements was through the way the elements were integrated into a total educational environment structured to reflect a particular theoretical frame of reference. The primary focus of the program was on the individual and his relationships with other individuals.

The students in the experimental group carried an average summer enrollment load of 6.3 credit hours compared to an average credit load of 6.5 hours for comparison group one. All students in comparison group one were enrolled in the freshman orientation course and most were enrolled in the freshman English course. Comparison group two was not enrolled during the summer term.

## Hypotheses and Research Questions

The null hypotheses tested by this study are divided according to primary and secondary hypotheses. The point of significance used was the .05 level of probability. Additional research questions for this study are divided as to empirically and non-empirically based questions.

The primary null hypotheses tested were:

1. There will be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned during the summer program by the experimental group and comparison group number one.
2. There will be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned by the experimental group and comparison group number one during the two long semesters following the program.
3. There will be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned by the experimental group and comparison group number two during the two long semesters following the program.

The secondary null hypotheses tested were:

1. There will be no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores on the Purpose-In-Life Scale for the experimental group.
2. There will be no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores on the Purpose-In-Life Scale for comparison group number one.
3. There will be no significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and comparison group number one on the Purpose-In-Life Scale.

4. There will be no significant difference between the experimental group pre- and post-test scores difference, and comparison group number one pre- and post-test scores difference on the Purpose-In-Life Scale.

The following empirically based questions were examined to gain additional information about the subjects for this study:

1. Compare the academic suspension and dropout rates for the experimental and comparison groups for each of the three semesters covered by this study.
2. Compare the pre and post reading rates for subjects in the experimental group who enrolled in a reading course.
3. Compare the pre and post ACT scores for subjects in the experimental group.
4. Compare the high school and college cumulative grade point averages for the experimental and comparison groups.

A non-empirically based question examined was the subjective statements of the subjects and staff as to the value of the experimental program.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The data used to examine the basic question for this study, the academic success of the research subjects, were collected before, during, and at the end of the three semesters of course work covered by this research.

The high school grade point average and ACT scores for each subject were collected from the Registrar's Office of the host institution prior to the beginning of the experimental program. The pre-test using the Purpose-In-Life Scale was administered to the experimental group and

comparison group one on the second day of classes during the summer term. The post-test measurement was given on the second to the last day of classes during the eighth week of the summer term. The scale was administered using identical procedures and written directions. The data obtained from the administration of the PIL Scale were used to test the secondary null hypotheses for this study.

An explanation of the Purpose-In-Life Scale was presented in the section of this chapter which described the characteristics of the subjects. In a personal letter to this researcher (see Appendix F), Dr. Crumbaugh, one of the developers of the PIL Scale, stated that a pre- and post-test plan in a situation of intensive manipulation of variables with freshman underachievers would be an excellent use of the PIL test. He noted that the test has been used successfully in pre and post-testing situations separated by only about a month.

The subjects' earned college grade point averages during the semesters they were enrolled at the host institution were obtained from the Registrar's Office. These data were used to test the primary null hypotheses of no difference between the earned grade point averages of the experimental group and each comparison group. These data were used also to examine research question number one, a comparison of the academic suspension and dropout rates for the three groups of subjects, and question number four, which required a comparison of high school and college grade point averages.

Research question number two compares the pre- and post-reading rates for the subjects enrolled in a reading course which was part of the experimental program. The reading rate test was administered the

first and last class session of the summer term by personnel in the University Reading Center.

The third research question examines the results of a re-test on the ACT for the subjects in the experimental group. The subjects had taken the ACT a first time during their senior year in high school which preceded the summer term experimental program. The re-test was administered during the final week of the eight week program.

During the last week of the experimental program, a questionnaire (see Appendix G) was administered to the experimental group to collect their subjective view of the value of the program to them. During the same time period, staff members submitted written reports of their views of the value of the experimental program.

Statistical analysis of the data collected was accomplished using the student t-test, percentage computations, and mean changes in performance. The subjective views of the students and staff as to the value of the program were analyzed for summary data and sample statements.

## Definition of Terms

The definitions of terms for this study are listed below to facilitate understanding and the possible cross-validation of the study.

Experimental Program - The experimental program consisted of all the planned educational experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, that were offered to each subject in the experimental group.

Academic Success - Academic success is defined in terms of (1) an earned grade point average (GPA) that permits continued enrollment at the host institution, and (2) a comparison of grade point averages

earned by the experimental group and each of the two comparison groups. A = 4.00 F = 0.00 grade points.

High Risk Student - The label "high risk" is used to designate students whose low college admission test scores and erratic high school records, taken together, place them at a disadvantage in academic competition with the majority of students at the host institution. High risk as defined includes variables within the system of higher education as well as of the individual student.

Academic Skills - The skills of reading, writing, and listening, as well as effective study habits, define the concept of academic skills as used in this study.

Purpose-In-Life (PIL) - The personality variable "purpose in life" is the degree to which an individual experiences a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The concept is defined as an index of general motivation.

Self Concept - The self concept is defined as an organized but fluid conceptual pattern of perceptions that the individual has about himself in relation to his environment. The concept one has of himself includes all the ideas, feelings, and expectations that are recognized, interpreted, and valued by the individual as his own.

Reality - When an individual faces reality, he accepts the existence of his environment as it is and fulfills his needs within its framework. For this study, reality is defined in terms of what the student must do to be academically successful in college.

Responsibility - An individual is responsible when he is able to fulfill his essential needs and does so in such a way that he does not

keep others from fulfilling their needs. For this study, the essential need is to be academically successful.

Goal Definition - Goal definition is the process of determining what one would like to do and be. The process includes a feasible plan of action as well as self examination.

Success Oriented - The concept of success orientation is based on the assumption that each student can be successful, and that all his educational experiences should reinforce past and present successes and strengths.

Reference Group - Those groups which include the individuals whose standards, goals, and attitudes make a difference to someone are his reference groups. An individual identifies or aspires to identify with his reference groups.

American College Testing Program Examination (ACT) - The ACT is a test designed to measure as directly as possible the abilities the student will have to apply in college academic work. The ACT Composite score, an index of the total educational development of a student, is the means of the four educational development scores of English usage, mathematics usage, social studies reading, and natural science reading.

## Limitations

The data collected from this research were the results of one approach to studying the question of academic success for one type of high risk student in one type of setting. The necessary method of selecting the experimental and comparison groups, as well as the loss of subjects during the study, cautions against generalizing the findings to other individuals or settings. Intervening variables included the unplanned educational experiences of the experimental group during

the summer term, variance among staff members in their efforts and success in implementing the theoretical tenets for the program, and the possible variability in grading standards for teachers who were and were not part of the experimental program staff. It was not determined which of the planned educational experiences had what specific effect on the results of the study.

This study should be considered as exploratory research that will require cross-validation using more rigorous sampling procedures. The results of this study as reported in Chapter V may suggest more valid studies of the question of academic success for the high risk student.

# CHAPTER V

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The presentation and analysis of data for this reserach will be reported as they relate to each of the hypotheses and research questions under study. Hypotheses that were supported with a t-test value at the .05 level of significance were accepted. The format for this chapter will be that of stating each hypothesis or research question, presenting an analysis of the related data, and finally presenting the data in tabular form.

### Primary Hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

> There will be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned during the summer program by the experimental group and comparison group one.

Table V presents the grade point average means, standard deviations, and the t-test value between the experimental group and comparison group one. The t-test value of .7409 is not significant at the .05 level, and the hypothesis of no difference is accepted. As reported in Chapter IV, the description of the subjects revealed that there was a significant level of difference between the experimental group and comparison group one for both the high school grade point averages and the ACT Composite scores of the subjects.

TABLE V

SUMMER GRADE POINT AVERAGE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND *t*-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND COMPARISON GROUP ONE

| Group | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | *t* Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 35 | 2.465 | .7381 | | |
| | | | | .7409 | NS |
| Comparison Group One | 42 | 2.594 | .7811 | | |

Critical value of *t* at .05 level is 2.000.

Hypothesis Two:

> There will be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned by the experimental group and comparison group number one during the two long semesters following the program.

The fall and spring combined grade point average means, standard deviation, and the t-test value between the experimental group and comparison group one are reported in Table VI. The t-test value of 5.1997 is significant at the .001 level, and the hypothesis of no difference is rejected. The description of the subjects as presented in Chapter IV revealed a significant level of difference between the experimental group and comparison group one for both high school grade point averages and ACT Composite scores of the subjects.

TABLE VI

FALL AND SPRING COMBINED GRADE POINT AVERAGE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND *t*-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND COMPARISON GROUP ONE

| Group | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | *t* Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 18 | 1.501 | .6172 | | |
| | | | | 5.1997 | .001 |
| Comparison Group One | 36 | 2.646 | .8238 | | |

Critical value of *t* at .05 level is 2.021.

Hypothesis Three:

> There will be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned by the experimental group and comparison group two during the two long semesters following the program.

Table VII presents the fall and spring combined grade point average means, standard deviation, and the t-test value between the experimental group and comparison group two. The t-test value of 1.2117 is not significant, and the hypothesis of no difference was accepted. The description of the subjects presented in Chapter IV revealed a significant difference between the experimental group and comparison group two for the high school grades of the subjects, and no significant difference between the groups for ACT Composite scores.

TABLE VII

FALL AND SPRING COMBINED GRADE POINT AVERAGE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND COMPARISON GROUP TWO

| Group | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 18 | 1.501 | .6172 | | |
| | | | | 1.2117 | NS |
| Comparison Group Two | 67 | 1.718 | .6908 | | |

Critical value of t at .05 level is 2.000.

## Secondary Hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

> There will be no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores on the Purpose-In-Life Scale for the experimental group.

The Purpose-In-Life test means, standard deviations, and the t-test value between the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group are reported in Table VIII. The t-test value of .7787 is not significant at the .05 level, and the hypothesis of no difference is accepted.

TABLE VIII

PURPOSE-IN-LIFE TEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

| Experimental Group | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Test | 35 | 107.343 | 15.595 | | |
| | | | | .7787 | NS |
| Post-Test | 35 | 110.257 | 15.712 | | |

Critical value of t at .05 level is 2.000.

Hypothesis Two:

> There will be no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores on the Purpose-In-Life Scale for comparison group one.

Table IX presents the Purpose-In-Life test means, standard deviations, and the t-test value between the pre- and post-test scores of comparison group one. The t-test value of .1990 is not significant, and the hypothesis of no difference is accepted.

TABLE IX

PURPOSE-IN-LIFE TEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES OF COMPARISON GROUP ONE

| Comparison Group One | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Test | 42 | 115.571 | 13.307 | | |
| | | | | .1990 | NS |
| Post-Test | 42 | 114.976 | 13.757 | | |

Critical value of t at .05 level is 2.000.

Hypothesis Three:

> There will be no significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and comparison group one on the Purpose-In-Life Scale.

The Purpose-In-Life test means, standard deviations, and the t-test value between the post-test scores of the experimental group and comparison group one are reported in Table X. The t-test value of 1.4048 is significant at the .20 level, but not at .05 level, thus the hypothesis of no difference is accepted. In the description of the subjects in Chapter V, it was revealed that on the PIL Scale pre-test measurement, there was a significant difference between the two groups at the .02 level.

TABLE X

PURPOSE-IN-LIFE TEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE POST-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND COMPARISON GROUP ONE

| Group | Number | Mean | Standard Deviation | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | 35 | 110.257 | 15.715 | | |
| | | | | 1.4048 | .20 |
| Comparison Group One | 42 | 114.976 | 13.757 | | |

Critical value of t at .05 level is 2.000.

Hypothesis Four:

> There will be no significant difference between the experimental group pre- and post-test scores difference and comparison group one pre- and post-test scores difference on the Purpose-In-Life Scale.

Table XI presents the Purpose-In-Life Scale t-test value between the pre- and post-test score difference of the experimental group and the pre- and post-test score difference of comparison group one. The t-test value of .7075 is larger than the computed t' of .1695. The hypothesis of no difference is rejected.

TABLE XI

PURPOSE-IN-LIFE TEST t-TEST VALUE BETWEEN THE PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORE DIFFERENCE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND THE PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORE DIFFERENCE OF COMPARISON GROUP ONE

| Group | Number | Mean | | t Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pre | Post | | |
| Experimental Group | 35 | 107.343 | 110.257 | | |
| | | | | .7075* | .05 |
| Comparison Group One | 42 | 115.571 | 114.926 | | |

*t-test value of .7075 is larger than t' of .1695.

## Research Questions

Question One:

> Compare the academic suspension and dropout rates for the experimental group and comparison groups for each of the three semesters covered by this study.

The number of subjects from each group that were dropouts or were suspended from the host institution for each of the three semesters covered by this study are reported in Table XII. The experimental group had fewer academic suspensions while part of the summer program than did comparison group one that received no treatment. However, during the fall and spring semesters the subjects in the experimental group were suspended for academic reasons and were dropouts at a higher rate than either of the comparison groups. A z score of 4.98 between the total attrition percents of the experimental group and comparison group one is significant at the .01 level. A z score of 4.40 between the total attrition percents of the experimental group and comparison group two is significant at the .01 level.

TABLE XII

THE NUMBER OF SUBJECTS FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, COMPARISON GROUP ONE, AND COMPARISON GROUP TWO THAT WERE DROPOUTS OR WERE SUSPENDED AT THE END OF EACH OF THE THREE SEMESTERS OF THE STUDY

| Semester Ending | Experimental Group | | Comparison Group One | | Comparison Group Two | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Summer Term | | | | | | |
| Initial Number | 35 | 100.00 | 42 | 100.00 | 0 | |
| Suspensions | 1 | 20.00 | 5 | 21.43 | 0 | |
| Dropouts | 6 | | 4 | | 0 | |
| Fall Semester | | | | | | |
| Initial Number | 28 | 100.00 | 33 | 100.00 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Suspensions | 0 | 35.71 | 0 | 6.06 | 0 | 9.33 |
| Dropouts | 10 | | 2 | | 7 | |
| Spring Semester | | | | | | |
| Initial Number | 18 | 100.00 | 31 | 100.00 | 68 | 100.00 |
| Suspensions | 6 | 33.33 | 1 | 3.23 | 20 | 29.85 |
| Total Attrition | 23 | 65.72 | 12 | 28.58 | 27 | 36.00 |

A z score of 4.98 between the total attrition percents of the experimental group and comparison group one is significant at the .01 level.

A z score of 4.40 between the total attrition percents of the experimental group and comparison group two is significant at the .01 level.

Question Two:

Compare the pre and post reading rates for subjects in the experimental group who enrolled in a reading course.

Table XIII reports the change in reading rates for the twenty-nine subjects in the experimental group who enrolled in a reading course which was part of the experimental program. An average word per minute increase in reading rate of 136.20 was accomplished. The range of improvement in reading rate was from a low of 34 words per minute to a high of 240 words per minute.

TABLE XIII

THE CHANGE IN READING RATES FOR THE TWENTY-NINE SUBJECTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WHO ENROLLED IN A READING COURSE

| Average Words Per Minute Read By Subjects | | Increase in Words Per Minute Read | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of Subjects | Number of WPM |
| Pre | 270.76 | 38% | 0 - 99 |
| Post | 409.97 | 24% | 100 - 199 |
| Improvement | 136.20 | 38% | 200 - 299 |

Question Three:

Compare the pre and post ACT scores for subjects in the experimental group.

The pre and post-test results for thirty-two subjects from the experimental group are presented in Table XIV. A t-test value of 2.5987 between the mean pre- and post-test composite scores is significant at the .02 level. This significance level suggests that the program did affect variables related to achievement on the ACT. The comparative number of subjects that went up and down on each of the subtests suggests that the program affected a general variable not necessarily related to the subject matter covered by the ACT. This general variable could be reading improvement or the attitudes of the testee toward test taking.

TABLE XIV

ACT PRE- AND POST-TEST RESULTS FOR THIRTY-TWO SUBJECTS FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

| | Mean Raw Scores | | Percent and Direction of Change | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Test Part | Pre | Post | Up | Down | Same |
| English | 13.75 | 15.00 | 59.38 | 25.00 | 15.62 |
| Mathematics | 12.47 | 14.53 | 65.50 | 28.13 | 9.37 |
| Social Science | 12.94 | 14.38 | 50.00 | 37.50 | 12.50 |
| Natural Science | 13.94 | 15.81 | 53.13 | 34.37 | 12.50 |
| Composite | 13.38 | 15.09 | 68.75 | 21.88 | 9.37 |

A t-test value of 2.5987 between the mean pre- and post-test composite scores is significant at the .02 level.

Question Four:

> Compare the high school and college mean grade point averages for the experimental and comparison groups.

Table XV presents the high school and college mean grade point averages and mean ACT Composite scores for the experimental and comparigroup subjects. The data in Table XV had been compared in various ways in Chapters IV and V, but are presented here to facilitate comparisons of high school grade point averages, college grade point averages, and ACT Composite scores for each group at three different stages of the study. One new observation about these data is that the mean ACT scores remain relatively constant when subject attrition occurs from each group. It would be expected that the mean ACT scores would go up with subject attrition, but this occurred only with comparison group one. The attrition rate was the most severe for the experimental group.

The college grade point averages earned were lower than high school grade point averages for all three groups. Comparison group two experienced the largest differential between high school and college grades.

TABLE XV

THE HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE MEAN GRADE POINT AVERAGES AND MEAN ACT COMPOSITE SCORES FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL AND COMPARISON GROUP SUBJECTS

| | Experimental Group | | | Comparison Group One | | | Comparison Group Two | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Subjects | Mean GPA | Mean ACT | Number of Subjects | Mean GPA | Mean ACT | Number of Subjects | Mean GPA | Mean ACT |
| High School and Pre-Program | 35 | 2.071 | 13.486 | 42 | 3.107 | 20.524 | 75 | 2.780 | 13.253 |
| Summer Term | 35 | 2.465 | 13.486 | 42 | 2.594 | 20.524 | -- | -- | -- |
| Fall and Spring Semesters Combined | 18 | 1.501 | 13.278 | 36 | 2.646 | 21.056 | 67 | 1.718 | 13.134 |

## Subjective Statements

The subjective statements of the experimental group subjects suggest that the experimental program was perceived as being of value to them. Of the twenty-eight subjects who completed a questionnaire (see Appendix G) at the end of the summer term, two were mildly dissatisfied, twenty were very satisfied, and six were extremely satisfied with their experiences in the program. Sixteen of the subjects felt that the program helped prepare them for the fall term, seven students noted the value of learning how to study, seven students mentioned the value of the English course, and five students suggested that the personal relationships between students and between the staff and students was of the most value to them. During the exit interviews between each student and the supervisor of the experimental program, the two themes that were repeated most often were the feeling that the staff was interested in them as individuals and the satisfaction of having had a successful academic experience.

The subjective statements of the staff for the experimental program suggest they perceived the program as being of value to the students. In written reports from each staff member, the most frequently cited value of the program was the personal attention that was extended to each student. The second most frequently cited value was that of the support the students received from the reference groups that were structured into the program. Finally, every staff member recommended that the experimental program be offered again for other high risk students.

# CHAPTER VI

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## Review of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if an experimental program that incorporates both the teaching of academic skills and the conditions for increased self-understanding of select personality variables can assist high risk college aspirants to be academically successful during the first year of college.

The study involved the development of an experimental program designed to meet the needs of high risk college students within the framework of higher education in this country. The eight week summer term experimental program was the independent variable for this study. The program included the selection and structuring of educational experiences, as identified through a review of the literature, that would contribute to the academic success of the high risk student. The experimental program also involved the hiring and inservice training of staff members, and the recruitment of subjects from the target population.

The subjects in the experimental program were enrolled in six to eight hours of college course work including remedial English, educational vocational orientation, a non-credit reading and study skills course, and electives of their choice. In addition, the program included individual counseling and group guidance, a supervised study

hall, tutoring in academic areas, and supervised residence hall living. A diagnostic approach was used by the staff to individualize and personalize each student's experience. The grouping of students and staff into sub-units permitted a high level of staff coordination and utilized the positive effects of reference group interaction.

The primary dependent variable for this study was an index of academic success as defined in terms of an earned grade point average. The secondary dependent variable was the pre and post measurement of the concept 'purpose in life' through the use of the Purpose-In-Life Test. Additional questions examined by the study were a pre and post comparison of reading test scores, a pre and post comparison of ACT scores, a comparison of high school and college grade point averages, and the academic suspension and dropout rates. Subjective statements of the experimental group subjects and program staff members as to the value of the experimental program were examined.

The experimental group for this research was recruited from the population of high school seniors in Oklahoma who scored 15 or below on the ACT Composite score and who sent their scores to Oklahoma State University, the host institution for the study. Comparison group one was composed of all new summer term freshmen enrolled in a required orientation course in the College of Arts and Sciences at the host institution. Comparison group two was composed of all new freshmen with an ACT Composite score of 15 or below who enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences required orientation course during the fall semester following the summer term experimental program. The experimental group received program treatment only during the summer term. The comparison groups were allowed to follow the regular university program

of academic courses and co-curricular experiences. Data were collected during the summer term of the experimental program and during the following fall and spring semesters.

## Summary of the Findings

The primary dependent variable for this research, academic success in terms of earned grade point averages, included three hypotheses of no difference. The point of significance used was the .05 level of probability. Hypothesis one stated that there would be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned during the summer program by the experimental group and comparison group one. This hypothesis of no difference was accepted. Hypothesis two was that there would be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned by the experimental group and comparison group number one during the two long semesters following the program. This hypothesis of no difference was rejected. The high school grades and the ACT Composite scores of the experimental group and comparison group one were different at a significant level, and would suggest that comparison group one would earn significantly higher college grades. This did not occur while the experimental group was receiving the program treatment, but did occur during the following two semesters.

The third hypothesis of the primary dependent variable stated that there would be no significant difference between the grade point averages earned by the experimental group and comparison group two during the two long semesters following the program. Hypothesis three was accepted. There was a significant difference between the high school grades of the experimental group and comparison group two, but no significant difference between the groups for ACT Composite scores.

The experimental program may have compensated the experimental group for this significant difference in high school grades and helped them compete academically with comparison group two subjects.

The secondary dependent variable for this study, a measurement of the concept 'purpose in life,' included four hypotheses of no difference. The point of significance used was the .05 level of probability. Hypothesis one stated that there would be no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores on the Purpose-In-Life Scale for the experimental group. Hypothesis one was accepted. The second hypothesis was that there would be no significant level of difference between the pre- and post-test scores on the Purpose-In-Life Scale for comparison group one. This hypothesis of no difference was accepted.

The third hypothesis of the secondary dependent variable stated that there would be no difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and comparison group one on the Purpose-In-Life Scale. Hypothesis number three was accepted. The pre-test PIL Scale measurement indicated a significant level of difference between the two groups at the beginning of the summer term. These data suggest that the experimental program did affect the PIL Scale scores of the experimental group in the direction of more purpose and meaning in life. The fourth hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between the experimental group pre- and post-test scores difference, and comparison group one pre- and post-test scores difference on the Purpose-In-Life Scale. The hypothesis of no difference was rejected. The data suggest that the experimental group changed more than comparison group one on the variable 'purpose in life' during the eight week summer term.

Four additional research questions were examined by this study. Question one was a comparison of the academic suspension and dropout rates for the experimental group and comparison groups. During the summer term, the experimental group had fewer suspensions than comparison group one, but the dropout rate was approximately the same for these two groups. During the following fall and spring semesters, the subjects in the experimental group were suspended for academic reasons and were dropouts at a higher rate than either of the comparison groups. The total attrition rate was significantly higher for the experimental group than for either comparison group.

The second question was a comparison of pre and post reading score rates for subjects in the experimental group who enrolled in a reading course as part of the experimental program. The mean word per minute increase in the reading rate of the group was 136.20 words. The range of improvement in reading rates was from a high of 240 words per minute to a low of 34 words per minute.

A third research question was a comparison of the pre and post ACT scores for the subjects in the experimental group. A t-test value between the mean pre and post-test Composite scores was significant at the .02 level. The mean composite raw score on the pre-test was 13.38 in comparison to a mean score of 15.09 on the post-test. A total of 68.75 percent of the subjects raised their composite test scores.

Research question four was a comparison of the high school and college grade point averages for the experimental group and the comparison groups. The mean college grade point averages earned were lower than the mean high school grade point averages for all three groups of subjects. Comparison group two experienced the most severe drop in

mean grade point averages, and comparison group one experienced the smallest mean difference in averages.

The subjective statements of the experimental program students and staff were in a positive direction as to the value of the program. The subjects felt that the program helped prepare them for the fall semester, and that the staff was interested in them as individuals. The students expressed positive self appraisals on the basis of their successful summer academic experience.

For the staff members, the most frequently cited values of the program were the personal attention extended to each subject and the positive effects from the reference groups that were structured into the program.

The findings from this exploratory research are the results of one approach to studying the question of academic success for one type of high risk student in one type of setting. The necessity of using as subjects those students who elected to attend the host institution, the loss of subjects during the study, and the unplanned experiences of the experimental group caution against generalizing the findings to other individuals or settings.

## Recommendations and Conclusions

This study produced new data and raised new research questions for further study in regard to the development of programs to assist high risk students to be academically successful in college. In evaluating the experimental program for this study, it was difficult to determine specifically which program elements were responsible for the academic success or failure of individual students. How many elements or factors in the program really made a difference? Theoretically, all of the

elements are important, but their specific empirical value was difficult to demonstrate. Consequently, assessment of individual components was based more on the personal testimony of students and program staff members than on empirical data. Future research should be designed to permit empirical assessment of the effects of specific independent variables. This researcher would suggest that the most important independent variables are the teaching of academic skills and the providing of an atmosphere in which sound personal relationships between people can easily develop. The formation of sub-groups of students and staff members utilizes the principles of reference group theory and does facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships.

The data from this study in regard to academic success would suggest that the high risk student will require a special program of assistance beyond a summer term period of time. Research could be done to determine if a modified but continuing program would increase the probability of their academic success. Possible modified programs could have the high risk student take reduced course work loads, receive continuing orientation to the college experience, and be given guidance and counseling in regard to occupational decisions. Also, the dependent variables under study should be expanded to cover personality characteristics such as change in self-concept, occupational goal definition levels, or the satisfaction level of students toward their college experiences. There are values to the student from a college experience other than receiving a degree or certificate. The data from future studies that vary the dependent and/or independent variables should produce additional information to be used in answering the

question of the validity and desirability of restrictive admission standards in a democratic society.

The meaning of letter grades earned in college courses may vary greatly between teachers and across disciplines. Future research could use standardized achievement tests to partially control this intervening variable. An additional question for future research is that of the relationship of the size of the graduating high school class of the subjects and earned college grade point averages. Comparison group two, with a significantly higher mean grade point average in high school than that of the experimental group, did not earn significantly higher grades than the experimental group during the fall and spring semesters in college. More data concerning the characteristics of the subjects could be collected to explore this relationship and to stimulate additional research questions.

The small number of subjects available for this study eliminated the possibility of using a control group to more rigorously test the significance of the data collected. This exploratory study could be replicated and cross-validated using statistically sound sampling procedures.

Historically, many universities have admitted quality students and graduated quality students. Today, institutions must attempt also to educate students with records of academic mediocrity or failure. Society cannot afford the loss of human resources, and individual human beings should not be denied the realistic chance to gain from a college experience. Present and future research findings should be integrated into the regular programming of universities with emphasis on providing

an environment conducive to the academic success and total development of individual students.

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# APPENDIX A

## THE PURPOSE-IN-LIFE TEST

Name_____ Date_____

Age_____ Sex_____ Classification_____

# THE PURPOSE IN LIFE TEST

by

James C. Crumbaugh, Ph.D., and Leonard T. Maholick, M.D.

For each of the following statements, circle the number that would be most nearly true for you. Note that the numbers always extend from one extreme feeling to its opposite kind of feeling. "Neutral" implies no judgment either way. Try to use this rating as little as possible.

1. I am usually:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| completely bored | | | (neutral) | | | exuberant, enthusiastic |

2. Life to me seems:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| always exciting | | | (neutral) | | | completely routine |

3. In life I have:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no goals or aims at all | | | (neutral) | | | very clear goals and aims |

4. My personal existence is:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| utterly meaningless, without purpose | | | (neutral) | | | very purposeful and meaningful |

5. Every day is:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| constantly new and different | | | (neutral) | | | exactly the same |

6. If I could choose, I would:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| prefer never to have been born | | | (neutral) | | | like nine more lives just like this one |

7. After retiring, I would:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| do some of the exciting things I have always wanted to do | | | (neutral) | | | loaf completely the rest of my life |

8. In achieving life goals I have:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| made no progress whatever | | | (neutral) | | progressed to complete fulfillment | |

9. My life is:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| empty, filled only with despair | | | (neutral) | | running over with exciting good things | |

10. If I should die today, I would feel that my life has been:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| very worthwhile | | | (neutral) | | completely worthless | |

11. In thinking of my life, I:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| often wonder why I exist | | | (neutral) | | always see a reason for my being here | |

12. As I view the world in relation to my life, the world:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| completely confuses me | | | (neutral) | | fits meaningfully with my life | |

13. I am a:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| very irresponsible person | | | (neutral) | | very responsible person | |

14. Concerning Man's freedom to make his own choices, I believe Man is:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| absolutely free to make all life choices | | | (neutral) | | completely bound by limitations of heredity and environment | |

15. With regard to death, I am:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| prepared and unafraid | | | (neutral) | | unprepared and frightened | |

16. With regard to suicide, I have:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| thought of it seriously as a way out | | | (neutral) | | | never given it a second thought |

17. I regard my ability to find a meaning, purpose, or mission in life as:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| very great | | | (neutral) | | | practically none |

18. My life is:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| in my hands and I am in control of it | | | (neutral) | | | out of my hands and controlled by external factors |

19. Facing my daily tasks is:

| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a source of pleasure and satisfaction | | | (neutral) | | | a painful and boring experience |

20. I have discovered:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no mission or purpose in life | | | (neutral) | | | clear-cut goals and a satisfying life purpose |

# APPENDIX B

## LETTER TO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • STILLWATER**

The Vice President For Academic Affairs
FRontier 2-6211, Ext. 6104

74074

March 23, 1968

Dear High School Senior:

Are you planning to attend college and are you interested in improving your chance to succeed in college? Many of your fellow students have expressed this same concern. Oklahoma State University wants you to know that we offer various courses and services to help students be more successful at college.

Among the many courses offered are those designed to help you improve your English usage, your reading and study skills, and to assist you in your educational and personal adjustment to the University. In addition, individual counseling is available to help you clarify your occupational plans.

For the summer term, 1968, many of these regular courses and services have been grouped together under a program called Operation Cope. Class size will be reduced and emphasis will be placed on individual assistance. We feel that this program will increase the value to you of these various services and courses. Many students have found that participation in a summer program has been helpful to them during the fall semester.

A limited number of students will be accepted into this special assistance program. If you want to get an early start in college, or if it is necessary for you to attend summer school under the new admissions policy, write to the address below for more information about Operation Cope. April 15, 1968, is the deadline for receiving applications for Operation Cope.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Robl
Operation Cope, Supervisor
Office of the Vice-President
for Academic Affairs
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

# APPENDIX C

## APPLICATION BLANK USED FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION

OPERATION COPE

Oklahoma State University
Application for Summer Term 1968

Operation Cope is a special program for a limited number of new freshmen who enroll at Oklahoma State University during the summer term, 1968. Applications must be received by April 15, 1968. Send the completed application to: Operation Cope, Supervisor - Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs - Oklahoma State University - Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074.

(Please Print or Type)

Name_____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address_____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Age_____ Sex_____ Marital Status_____ Number of brothers and sisters_____

Father: (Name)_____

Address_____

Highest Level of Education Completed_____ Occupation_____

Mother: (Name)_____

Address_____

Highest Level of Education Completed_____ Occupation_____

High School Presently Attending: (Name)_____

Location_____

Size of Senior Class_____ Approximate Rank in Senior Class_____

High School Grade Point Average (A=4.0)___Final Grade in Junior Year English___

Have you ever received special instruction in reading? Yes___ No___

Have you ever received instruction in study skills? Yes___ No___

Describe the present state of your occupational plans. If undecided, list possible choices_____

List some of the activities, in school or out, that you enjoy_____

List some of your strongest points as you see them_____

Physical limitations that you feel may affect your success at college_____

On a separate sheet please write approximately 100 words telling us what you would hope to gain from participating in Operation Cope.

Date_____ Signature_____

# APPENDIX D

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR ORIENTATION DAY

Oklahoma State University
Operation Cope
Summer, 1968

GENERAL INFORMATION

Operation Cope is only the name of a program designed to help you be more successful in college, and to assist you in determining your educational and occupational goals. The program is nothing until you bring it to life by taking an active part in its offerings. By working together we can determine your needs and plan a course of action.

Based on past experience with college students, we are suggesting that the following program can be of value to you:

1. Enroll in English 0103, English Composition.
   To be successful in college, it is necessary for you to be able to express your ideas correctly.

2. Enroll in Arts & Sciences 1111, Educational and Vocational Orientation.
   This course is designed to help you get as much as possible from your college experience. It is an informal discussion class in which you can ask questions and discuss what college can mean to you.

3. Take a non-credit Reading and Study Skills Course if you feel your reading speed and comprehension is below the level you desire. The ability to read well is very helpful in college.

4. Meet with a college counselor for one hour each week to discuss your educational and occupational plans, and to discuss any other topics relating to college that are of concern to you. When you enroll today, you can determine the time for your first meeting.

5. Take advantage of a study hall area that will be located in the basement of Wentz Residence Hall. It will be available Sunday through Thursday nights from 8:00 to 10:30 p.m. A tutor for English will be available during each of these periods.

Additional information and ideas will be published in a weekly newsletter that you will be receiving.

If you have a question or would like to visit with me, please come to Life Sciences Building, Room 202. Or you can contact me by telephone by calling Extension 221 on campus, and FR 2-5319 which is my home telephone number. I hope to be able to visit with you regularly throughout the eight-week summer school term.

After you complete your enrollment today, you will be ready to attend classes which begin at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 5th.

Richard M. Robl
Supervisor, Operation Cope

# APPENDIX E

# CASE STUDY DATA SHEETS

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
OPERATION COPE
Summer, 1968

# GUIDELINES FOR CASE STUDY DATA COLLECTION

The case study approach to assisting low-achieving students is a method of collecting and examining all data available on a student. This data will aid the student and staff in implementing a plan of action best suited to the needs of each student.

A case study data sheet is only a guide, it will need to be adapted to each case. If the data your report contains cannot be verified, state it as your opinion. Collecting good case study data requires an empathetic personal relationship with the individual. The nature of your contact with the student will effect the amount of data you will have for each section of the sheet. The more complete your report, the more valuable it will be.

The suggestions below are not meant to be all inclusive. But they can serve as an initial guide for your observations.

1. Academic Aspects
   Achievement, ability, skills, work habits, teacher relationship, study environment, attitude, strengths & weaknesses, aspirations, attitude toward college and intellectual pursuits, motivation, etc.....

2. Personal Characteristics
   Concept of self, temperment, values, appearance, outlook on life, strengths and weaknesses, range of interests, source of motivation, self-understanding, self-worth, reality orientation, time orientation, responsibility, willingness to accept assistance, attitude toward Operation Cope, etc.....reaction to success and failure,

3. Social Relationships, Family Situation, and Physical Condition
   Social: roommate, boy-girl, peer group, social situations, satisfaction with relationships, etc.....
   Family: parents, siblings, relationship, dependency, socia-economic aspects, etc.....
   Physical: state of health, habits, deficiencies, etc.....

4. Occupational and Vocational Development
   Plans, clarity of goals and methods of fulfilling, doubts, satisfactions, aspirations, potential barriers,

5. Other Comments
   This could include information and impressions that do not fit into the above categories. Also, it could include incidents or situations that are of special note.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

OPERATION COPE
Summer, 1968

CASE STUDY DATA SHEET

Student's Name_____ Date_____

Evaluator_____ Position_____

1. Academic Aspects:

2. Personal Characteristics:

3. Social Relationships, Family Situation, & Physical Condition:

4. Occupational & Vocational Development:

5. Other Comments:

# APPENDIX F

## LETTER FROM DR. JAMES C. CRUMBAUGH

**VETERANS ADMINISTRATION**
CENTER
GULFPORT DIVISION
BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI 39531

May 17, 1968

YOUR FILE REFERENCE:

IN REPLY REFER TO: 520(G/183)

Mr. Richard M. Robl
Supervisor, Operation Cope
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Dear Mr. Robl:

Thank you for your letter of May 9, and for your interest in the Purpose-in-Life Test. It is being submitted to a test publisher, but in the meantime I shall be glad for you to reproduce it for research purposes.

Your before-and-after plan with under-achievers in the Freshman class sounds like an excellent situation for use of the PIL, and I would predict that it will successfully measure effects of your summer training. There is no alternate form, but it has been successfully used in pre-and post-testing situations separated by only about a month in time, and is currently being used in two such settings. I believe that it will prove, like the MMPI, to be workable in such settings separated by no more time than this provided a vigorous program of manipulation of intervening variables is in effect. And in your case the separation will probably be two months or more, with intensive manipulation.

If I can be of any further service, please do not hesitate to call on me. I would ask only to share in the knowledge of the results you obtain.

Sincerely yours,

James C. Crumbaugh

JAMES C. CRUMBAUGH, Ph.D.
Coordinator of Unit I
Psychological Services &
Research Director
Psychology Service

# APPENDIX G

# INFORMATION AND EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

OPERATION COPE
Summer, 1968

Name_____

At the close of the summer session your responses to the questions below will greatly help us to plan a better Operation Cope of the future. Please answer each question as fully as possible. Thank you!!

1. How satisfied were you with your summer experiences in Operation Cope?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Mildly Dissatisfied | Very Satisfied | Extremely Satisfied |

Now, please explain the "why" of your answer above.

2. For you, what was the most valuable thing about Operation Cope?

3. What about Operation Cope was of least value to you?

4. What would you suggest that we change or add to Operation Cope of the future?

VITA

Richard Michael Robl

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE PROBABILITY OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR THE 'HIGH RISK' COLLEGE ASPIRANT

Major Field: Student Personnel and Guidance

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Great Bend, Kansas, April 28, 1936, the son of Mat and Mary Robl.

Education: Attended grade schools near Ellinwood, Kansas; graduated from St. Joseph's Military Academy, Hays, Kansas, in 1954; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Benedict's College in 1958, with a major in Sociology; received the Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Kansas in 1959, with a major in Language Arts; received the Master of Science degree from the University of Kansas in 1960, with a major in Educational Psychology and Guidance; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in July 1971.

Professional Experience: Teacher and Counselor at St. Mary of the Plains High School, Dodge City, Kansas, 1961-62; Director of Guidance Program at Antioch Junior High School, Kansas City North, Missouri, 1962-63; Teacher Adviser for U. S. Military Dependent Schools, Verdun, France, 1963-64; Director of Student Residence Affairs at the University of Texas, Arlington, Texas, 1964-65; Assistant Dean of Student Life at the University of Texas, Arlington, Texas, 1965-66; Counselor, Academic Adviser, and Teacher in the College of Arts and Sciences at Oklahoma State University, 1966-68; Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Oklahoma State University, 1968-70; Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Instructor in the College of Education at Oklahoma State University, 1970 to present.

Professional Organizations: American Association for Higher Education; American College Personnel Association; American Personnel and Guidance Association; Phi Delta Kappa.